

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 EB-11 COME-00 AID-20 TRSE-00

SWF-02 AGR-20 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SP-03

DRC-01 /100 W

----- 080115

R 271050Z AUG 74

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

SECSTATE WASHDC 0130

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAHORE 1154

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS ECRE, PK

SUBJECT: UN OFFICIAL CALLS ECONOMIC SIDE EFFECTS OF

TARBELS EMERGENCY DISASTROUS

BEGIN SUMMARY: UNDP (UNIDO) ADVISOR YURI PRAZAK, IN CON-
VERSATION WITH CONGEN ECON/COMM OFF, SUBSEQUENTLY
REPEATED FOR MY BENEFIT, HAS EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN
OVER "ECONOMICALLY DISASTROUS" CONSEQUENCES OF PREMATURE
RELEASE OF WATER IN TARBELA DAM DUE TO TROUBLE DISCOVERED
IN TUNNELS DURING TEST PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

1. IN DETAILED CONVERSATION WITH CONGEN ECON/COMM OFFICER
(MILLER-JONES) DURING UNSCHEDULED OFFICE CALL AUG 26,
SUBSEQUENTLY REPEATED FOR MY BENEFIT, UNDP ADVISOR YURI
PRAZAK SURPRISED US BY SAYING HE FELT STRONGLY THAT EFFECTS
OF CURRENT TARBELA DAM EMERGENCY WOULD BE NEARLY AS
CATASTROPHIC AS LAST YEAR'S FLOODS -- FOR EXACTLY OPPOSITE
REASONS. PRAZAK SAID THERE WAS SERIOUS DANGER TO STANDING
KHARIF CROPS, RICE, SUGAR CANE, COTTON, AND MAISE DUE
TO A SHORTAGE OF WATER CAUSED BY PREMATURE RELEASE OF THE
LAKE BEHIND TARBELS AND "WASTEAGE" DOWN INDUS. THIS WATER
HAD BEEN COUNTED ON FOR IRRIGATION VIA LINK CANALS OF
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LEFT AND RIGHT BANKS OF CHENAB AND JHELUM IN SEPTEMBER

BEFORE THE RABI (WINTER) SOWING. RICE, HE SAID, ESPECIALLY NEEDED FLOODING JUST AS KERNELS FORMING.

2. WHILE SOME OF SHORTFALL COULD BE MADE UP BY WATER FROM MANGLA, LATTER'S POND WAS CONSIDERABLY REDUCED THIS YEAR DUE TO POOR RAIN IN CATCHMENT AREAS. FURTHERMORE, ANY RAPID DEPLETION OF POND BEHIND MANGLA WOULD RESULT IN RADICAL LOSS OF POWER GENERATING CAPABILITIES WHICH BY MID-NOVEMBER COULD BE DOWN TO ABOUT 400 MEGAWATTS FROM ITS PRESENTLY REDUCED CAPACITY OF APPROXIMATELY 600 MW. (PRAZAK SAID MANGLA SHOULD GENERATE 750 MW AT THIS TIME OF YEAR IF POND WAS NORMAL.) BY END OF DECEMBER IT COULD BE DOWN TO 300 MW--JUST ENOUGH TO PROVIDE "PEAKING" ON THE GRID, BUT LITTLE MORE. ONE SERIOUS ANCILLARY EFFECT OF THIS POWER LOSS, OF COURSE, WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT ELECTRICITY TO RUN MANY TUBEWELLS, AND PROBABLE MID-WINTER BROWN-OUTS IN LAHORE AND OTHER CITIES.

3. TARBELA WATER HAD BEEN COUNTED ON THIS YEAR, ACCORDING TO PRAZAK, BECAUSE RIVERS ARE CONSIDERABLY BELOW EXPECTATIONS THIS YEAR. SUTLEJ IS NEARLY DRY, RAVI AND CHENAB ARE FAR BELOW NORMAL LEVELS, AND WITH ONLY ABOUT TWENTY DAYS TO THE END OF MONSOON SEASON, JHELUM WAS ALSO QUITE LOW. IN SHORT, THE DANGER IS NOT THE FLOODS ON THE INDUS THAT NEWSPAPERS REPORT BEING CONTROLLED, BUT A SERIOUS WATER SHORTAGE THAT COULD CAUSE EITHER DROUGHT TO CROPS OR REDUCED POWER GENERATION, OR BOTH. IT COULD, AT WORST, CAUSE THE LOSS OF 100,000 MT OF SUGAR CANE, 500,000 MT OF COTTON, AND ENTIRE CROP OF BASMATI RICE, THE PRINCIPAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNER NOW THAT COTTON IS NO LONGER KING. (PRAZAK ADDED THAT IN ADDITION TO DROUGHT THREAT, SHEIKHUPURA AND GUJRANWALA DISTRICTS' RICE CROPS WERE ALSO SUFFERING SERIOUS PEST PROBLEM THIS YEAR.) WITH INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT AT ITS LOWEST EVER, ACCORDING TO PRAZAK, ANY FURTHER LOSS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS (NOT TO MENTION BEYOND REPAIR COSTS OF DAM ITSELF) WHICH WOULD RESULT IN CUTS OF IMPORTS OF INDUSTRIAL RAW MATERIALS WILL HAVE MULTIPLE, POTENTIALLY DISASTROUS, EFFECTS ON ECONOMY AS WHOLE.

4. WE ASKED PRAZAK IF HE WANTED BE PROTECTED AS SOURCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND HE SAID DEFINITELY NOT. HIS VIEWS WERE WELL KNOWN IN WAPDA AND OTHER GOP CIRCLES. WHEN WE ASKED WHO IN GOP WOULD BE BEST INFORMED ON SUBJECT IN CASE EMBASSY WISHED PURSUE IT IN ISLAMABAD, HE REPLIED POLITICIANS SUCH AS BHUTTO, PIRZADA AND MUBASHIR -- CHIEF SPOKESMEN ON TARBELA EMERGENCY TO DATE -- WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT COMPREHEND REAL ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF TARBELA PROBLEM (THOUGH MUBASHIR UNDERSTANDS ENGINEERING PROBLEMS OF DAM). HIGHEST KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICIALS WOULD

BE IMTIAZI OF PLANNING BOARD AND FIN/SECY A. G. N. KAZI.

5. COMMENT ON SOURCE: PRAZAK IS CZECH EXPATRIATE, PERMRES OF US ASPIRING FOR CITIZENSHIP. DAUGHTER AT WELLESLEY REPORTEDLY BEING NATURALIZED SOON. HE IS THOUGHTFUL, CONSCIENTIOUS TECHNICIAN IN GOOD POSITION TO KNOW ABOUT SUCH MATTERS AS HE REPORTS, THOUGH HE TENDS TO BE EXCITABLE. EMBASSY MAY WISH CHECK OUT HIS STORY BECAUSE OF SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR PAK DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN ECONOMY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, DAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LAHORE01154
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740237-1039
From: LAHORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740815/aaaaampw.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <16 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UN OFFICIAL CALLS ECONOMIC SIDE EFFECTS OF TARBELS EMERGENCY DISASTROUS
TAGS: ECRE, PK, UNDP, (PRAZAK, YURI)
To: ISLAMABAD
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005